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This conference, on the importance of the humanities in a society that is becoming more urban, youthful, and leisured, noted that humane ideals must not be lost in the quest for technical expertise. Junior colleges, relatively free from academic tradition, can respond to this expectation. The objectives of this conference were (1) to foster an esprit de corps among the teachers, (2) to encourage an exchange of ideas on junior college functions, (3) to coordinate attacks on common problems, (4) to direct university resources to these needs, and (5) to set a precedent for future and continuing discussion, especially on curriculum and instruction. The opening address for the conference was on the ideals, myths, and realities of the junior college mission. Six groups discussed the following (1) faculty attitudes to liberal arts education, (2) the ideal junior college and its aims, (3) junior college as an institution and its relationship to other institutions of higher education, (4) the role the teacher plays or should play in educating the heterogeneous student body, (5) the uniqueness of the junior college and its problems, and (6) a summary of the questions, problems, and recommendations, with suggestions for further study, as revealed by these discussion groups. Recommended was the establishment of (1) a way to evaluate the junior college and its individual disciplines and (2) intercollegiate programs that would use resources more effectively. (HH)

Minnesota Junior College

Faculty Interests and Concerns

Report of a Conference of Instructors in the Humanities

January 14—16, 1968

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Minnesota Junior College

Faculty Interests and Concerns

Report of a Conference of Instructors in the Humanities

January 14—16, 1968

Norman W. Moen, Ramon L. Stave
EDITORS

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Louis W. and Maud Hill Family Foundation of St. Paul

Department of Conferences and Institutes
Nolte Center for Continuing Education
The General Extension Division

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Minnesota Junior College Faculty Conference I:
The Humanities
January 14-16, 1968

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Austin State Junior College, Group Leader

Harry N. AmEnd
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DISCUSSION GROUP VI:

Eugene Sorensen
Rochester State Junior College, Group Leader

Elizabeth Morehouse
Rochester State Junior College, Recorder

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

The growth and change characteristic of American society today offers the nation's junior and community colleges a remarkable series of opportunities for significant public service.

According to some predictions, the population of the United States will reach 230 million in 1975. Approximately three-fourths of the total will be living in urban centers, and about one-half will be twenty-five years old or younger.

In all likelihood, many of these urban, youthful citizens will find themselves troubled by agrarian mores and puritan work ethics in a society in which the character of labor is changing. Already sociologists point out that modern engineering is doing away with labor as a fact of life, except for the creative, and warn us to prepare for a future as consumers rather than as producers. Thanks to computers, they say, a large proportion of the present work force may soon have to be retrained, and free time will probably become more and more abundant for those least equipped to use it. A new way of life may be opening before us—a prospect complicated by the fact that there is little precedent in history to guide us as we move toward the future.

For our expanding, urban, youthful, leisured citizenry is indeed living in an enormously complex and rapidly changing world. Even a hasty glance into the immediate past reminds us that this is so. So far in the twentieth century, for example, we have moved from the Romanoffs to the U.S.S.R., from Kitty Hawk to space walking. The atom and the genetic code have been cracked, and the sun has set on the empires of Mussolini, Hitler, Queen Victoria, and the Manchu dowager, Tzu-hsi. Some things, however, do not change. Men still kill one another *en masse*, more efficiently than ever, with chemicals, microorganisms, and nuclear weapons.

Education is inextricably caught up in these and other changes. Without pausing to categorize cause and effect, we note a great emphasis upon professionalism, technical education, and graduate study on our campuses today. These developments represent response to the times, but much is being slighted. Berkeley points to the need for paying attention to undergraduate instruction and to teaching method in addition to course content. Tension in the cities reminds us that minority groups and the economically and socially handicapped look to education for upward mobility. Education of an elite cannot be the sole preoccupation of colleges and universities in a democratic society, whose welfare rests upon informed and participating citizens. And humane ideals cannot be lost in the race for technical expertise. Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, put it this way: "To omit understanding from education, and to conceive of the university as the instrument by which we become prosperous and powerful, is to guarantee, insofar as an educational system can affect the outcome, the collapse of civilization."

American junior and community colleges can remedy such omissions and respond to such warnings. These institutions are relatively new and untrammelled by stultifying academic traditions. They are strategically located between lower and higher education, and, in many cases, in urban centers. Moreover, they deal in an essential product. An editorial in the Minneapolis *Tribune* put it this way:

> Every American state university is being flooded with students who might benefit themselves and their communities more by pursuing strictly vocational courses elsewhere, perhaps after two years of general education background supplemented by technical training just below the expert, professional level. The pay is good, the status middle class, so that a comprehensive system focused on this problem would, it seems, satisfy everybody: industry, the student and aspiring parents.

Other commentators speak of the junior college in even broader terms. They say that this segment of higher education today is assuming characteristics which make it "as much a social movement as an educational enterprise." It is, or has the possibility of becoming, a "people's college" with doors open to all high-school graduates who seek to enter; with courses of study based upon the knowledge that there are in the world today opportunities for productive careers requiring less than four, as well as four or more, years of education; with the set purpose of being responsive to the special educational requirements of the communities in which they are situated.

The junior college in Minnesota is in an excellent position to respond to these and other expectations. The first public junior college in this state opened its doors in 1915. For almost fifty years, these two-year institutions were each operated by separate independent school districts. There was no tradition of coordination, and not very much cooperation or even communication among Minnesota junior colleges.

Today, the situation has changed radically. Sixteen public and six private junior colleges enroll approximately 12%, or 11,000, of all the students registered in Minnesota's colleges and universities. A state-sponsored system, supported by student fees and legislative appropriations, was established in 1964. New colleges have been founded, enrollments are growing, the public is interested, and societal needs offer unprecedented opportunities.

The junior college teacher is the central figure in this challenge. His situation is ably summarized in a recent study published by the American Association of Junior Colleges:

> Not simply a post-high-school instructor of grades thirteen and fourteen, he is . . . in a *new* kind of collegiate effort, as yet ill-defined and in furious flux. He is unsure of his status in the educational spectrum, for he fits few traditional categories . . . . "All kinds" come to the junior colleges, and the teacher's mandate is to instruct "all kinds," and at a level reputable enough to be termed "higher education" . . . traditional teacher-expectations of freshmen and sophomore students are simply not applicable in most junior colleges. Instead of homogeneity of backgrounds and abilities, the instructor faces heterogeneity of a really extra-ordinary sort. Instead of "usual" collegiate motivations in students, teachers deal with motives-for-being-in-college ranging from immediate employability to fantasy notions about careers wholly unrelated to the obvious abilities (or lack of them) brought by the student to his college experience . . . .

The study continues by pointing out that junior college teachers are concerned about meeting the requirements of students wishing to transfer to four-year colleges at the same time that they also are concerned about maintaining the flexible response characteristic of the open-door college. The teachers scorn the "standard academic mind," but they also want recognition from graduate schools and professional organizations.

Many of these teachers agree that the junior college has a unique mission and that they, as faculty members, should not look to traditional collegiate- or secondary-school patterns for solutions to junior college problems. But teaching loads are heavy, and few institutions provide funds for travel to professional meetings or make arrangements for sabbaticals.

As a result, the A.A.J.C. study reports,

> . . . one striking fact—familiar but worth underscoring—is brought home again and again to anyone who visits junior college teachers around the country: individual faculties are isolated from one another, both as groups and as individuals within separate disciplines.
> . . . there is unquestionably an immediate need for junior college teachers to have multiple and effective sources of contact with one another, so that innovations in curriculum and teaching practices, the development and sharing of instructional materials, and the mutual profit and stimulation of discussion, can contribute to their sense of professional unity.

The study quoted here is Roger H. Garrison's *Junior College Faculty: Issues and Problems* (Washington: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1967). This publication led Dr. Alfred L. Vaughan, Dean of the University of Minnesota's General College, to suggest that means be found to enable junior college and University faculty representatives to confer about common problems and profit from discussing mutual interests. He instructed Dr. Norman W. Moen, Assistant Dean of the General College, to explore ways of developing the suggestion. Dean Moen ultimately brought the matter to Mr. Ramon L. Stave of the Department of Conferences and Institutes of the University of Minnesota General Extension Division.

The germ of a plan for a series of conferences to be attended by representatives of the faculties of all public and private junior colleges in Minnesota was presented to an *ad hoc* committee composed of junior college faculty, officials from the St. Paul office of the State Junior College Board, the General Extension Division, the College of Education, and the General College. This group drew up a proposal which was submitted to, and ultimately approved by, the Louis W. and Maud Hill Family Foundation of St. Paul.

More specifically, the Foundation granted funds to the General Extension Division to mount a series of three conferences to be held during the 1967-1968 academic year for representatives of the faculties of all public and private junior colleges in Minnesota. Among the objectives these conferences would seek to attain were

- — to foster a sense of unity, identity, and *esprit de corps* among junior college teachers.
- — to encourage cross-fertilization of ideas among faculties about possible functions of the junior college in higher education in Minnesota.
- — to promote and coordinate joint attack upon common problems.
- — to acquaint the University of Minnesota and other agencies with junior college problems in the hope that resources may be focused where needs are most acute.
- — to establish the precedent for what could become annual conferences devoted to discussion of general matters affecting academic policies, especially those relating to curriculum and instruction.

The grant was for 1967-1968, but the Foundation agreed to renew it for 1968-1969 if the work of the first year proved successful.

As soon as the grant was made, an advisory committee of junior college and University personnel, serving under the chairmanship of Dr. Philip C. Helland, Chancellor of the Minnesota State Junior College System, met to plan the conferences. Themes were suggested, planning subcommittees were appointed, and main speakers were selected.

At the same time, the advisory committee authorized construction of a series of questionnaires designed to elicit from the faculties themselves opinions and suggestions about what should be the form and content of each conference. The questionnaires were intended to be the means of making the conferences genuine grass-roots affairs dealing in real issues

and matters of immediate and practical concern. The results indicated that Minnesota junior college faculties are interested in *everything*—curriculum, instruction, students, counseling, administration. The questionnaires were too helpful. They did not discriminate enough to be useful guides to the planning committees.

What is more, planning for the conference began to move away from a traditional subject-matter-oriented program to one that would actively involve each participant in a discussion of broad concerns. This shift occurred in the relatively short interval between the appointment of the committee and their first meeting. Their reaction to this approach can only be characterized as spontaneous and enthusiastic.

Accordingly, the invitations sent to participants by Mr. Stave and the chairman of the planning committee, Professor Leon Reisman, read in part as follows:

> Despite an early, and surely natural, inclination to develop a subject-matter conference, the Planning Committee soon began to regard such a design with increasing dismay. Regional and national meetings, fabricated along traditional lines, already abound. The Planning Committee . . . did not wish, for example, to anticipate weakly the National Conference on College Composition and Communication scheduled for Minneapolis in just a few months.
>
> Before long, members of the Planning Committee began to reason in this way: the junior colleges make a special and distinguished contribution to higher education in our state; instructors in the humanities in these colleges are a highly articulate group. Instead of shriveling these creative people into barren and passive roles as spectators, why not devise a conference which releases their imagination and inventiveness? Why not ask instructors in the humanities to consider the role of their colleges in their communities, and to recommend how the enormous potential and the needs of our junior colleges might best be served by other institutions of higher learning in this state?
>
> Accordingly, we now invite you and other representatives of Minnesota junior colleges to meet in small and spirited groups and address yourselves freely to questions like these: What do you conceive to be the mission of your college in your community? How is this reflected in your classroom? What do you want your students to know about art or philosophy or English? Why do you want them to know it? How do you go about teaching the students you have in your junior college classroom? How should a new instructor be prepared to teach your subject in your college? Can the state colleges and the University of Minnesota serve this vital and rapidly developing institution . . . the junior college? What specific recommendations would you make to the state colleges and the University of Minnesota?

As this invitation was being written, group leaders and recorders were being selected upon the recommendation of junior college personnel on both the advisory and the planning committees. The leaders were brought to Minneapolis for training in the difficult art of presiding over unstructured group discussions. All of these training sessions were led by Dr. Alan R. Anderson, Assistant Professor of Counselor Education in the College of Education. At one of them, Dr. Anderson shared the chairmanship with Virginia Satir of the Satir-Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California.

On Sunday afternoon, January 14, 1968, Mr. Garrison, Mr. Reisman, Mr. Stave, the group leaders, and the recorders met for lunch and a final briefing at the Sheraton-Ritz Hotel in Minneapolis. And on Sunday evening, the conference began with sherry and dinner at the University of Minnesota Campus Club.

In their letter of invitation, Mr. Reisman and Mr. Stave wrote:

> A flexible, relatively unstructured conference in higher education is quite new in Minnesota. But blazing a new educational path may well prove invigorating, even fructifying. The Planning Committee is unswerving in its faith that our conference will intrigue the gifted people in the humanities; that they will find the experience rich—we dare hope, exhilarating; and that all higher educational institutions in the state will benefit from their suggestions.

These brave words masked a great deal of uncertainty. No one was sure that an unstructured conference would work. The following pages tell what happened.

Norman W. Moen
Ramon L. Stave

University of Minnesota
March, 1968

SECTION 2

JUNIOR COLLEGE MISSIONS: Ideals, Myths, Realities

Roger H. Garrison
Chairman, Language and Literature Department
Westbrook Junior College, Portland, Maine

Whoever thought up this title for the program did me a real favor: it covers so much ground that it leaves me free to say just about anything I please. Since I intended to do that anyway, it's pleasant to have my intentions legitimatized.

As you know, this is the first of three conferences devoted to junior college *faculty* interests and concerns. This is a good thing. Since most educational conferences are dominated by administrators and administrative concerns, it seems to me that at these conferences you will have both the opportunities — and the challenges that go with them — to address yourselves frankly, openly, and profitably to matters of professional interest to yourselves, without presidents and deans peering over your intellectual shoulders. Further, if I rightly understand the structure of your work here for the next two days, this will be genuinely *your* conference. There will be no panels, or visiting experts, or position papers, or any of the over-structured apparatus which would guarantee your passive participation. It will be the other way around. Each of you is, or can be, a resource person: a unique contributor to his colleagues — and even more importantly, to himself. This conference asks only that you relax, stay loose intellectually and emotionally, and enter vigorously and thoughtfully into the discussions to come. If you have come to this conference hoping to be "given" something by a group of authorities, I am rather afraid that you may be disappointed. None of us feels either knowledgeable or arrogant enough to pose as an expert on any facet of the junior college field. These conferences have been deliberately (and, I may say, courageously) designed as genuine explorations — which is to say that the results are not predetermined. Explorations, by their very nature, contain uncertainties and a predictable amount of tension, and they often pose more questions than they answer.

The basic premise here is both simple and an assertion of faith: that if you bring together people of intelligence and good will, who have aims and problems in common; if you give them an informal situation, comfortable, free from pressure — either from superiors or from arbitrary demands; and if you insist only that they speak their minds freely — and allow the same freedom to others — trying to find common denominators of experience and insight; something good will come of it for each person. And, by extension, the hope is that each of you will take back to his own campus new points of view, other perspectives, and perhaps even revised convictions, which could affect in a positive way the quality of instruction on his own campus.

Now — what about Missions, Ideals, Myths, and Realities? The French said it: *Plus ça change, plus c'est le même chose* — the more things change, the more they remain the same. If I have anything of value to share with you here, it might be an awareness — sharpened and underlined by two years of travelling all over the United States talking with junior college teachers and administrators — that, despite the speed and scope of change in higher education, there are still major problems for teachers that are perennial, important, obvious — and largely unsolved. We would do well to remind ourselves of them, not only at conferences like this one, but regularly and attentively on our home campuses.

For example, I would say that the first and most continually pressing of these problems has to do with aims: the aims of the particular college and, even more especially, the personal-professional aims of the individual instructor. Phrased more bluntly: do we know what we are trying to do; do we *do* what we say we are trying to do; and does the administration of the college have the same view of these questions as the faculty does? Permit me to doubt — not cynically — that the answers are unqualifiedly "yes."

A college must know what it is, what it aims to do, and what it *can* do — and it must know these things with a clarity, a realism, a functional definiteness that is unmistakable. The college must enlist its faculty in defining these aims and in carrying on these functions. The college must also state these purposes, not only in words, but in policies and programs that have some reasonable relation to reality.

Yet, to cite one minor but typical example, the college catalogue is usually an administrative production. It is apt to be glossy, preoccupied with a selling image, and is usually confused in its organization. (Try to find the information you want in the usual catalogue.) Faculty are usually asked to submit course descriptions; but beyond this, the Public Relations office or an assistant dean's office creates the book. Statements of aims and purposes, for the most part, read like the academic-jargon equivalent of the Boy Scout laws, laced with an amorphous piety of intent that sounds incontestably noble. (A few months ago, I picked up a student newspaper on a campus I was visiting, and it commented editorially that the new catalogue was "high on the list of fictional reading available to students . . . .") In most catalogues, course descriptions are usually cryptic lists of terms and phrases which might fit any of a dozen approaches to a subject area. Indeed, the most detailed and intelligible parts of catalogues are those portions dealing with credit arithmetic, grades, prerequisites, campus regulations, and money. In effect, the major public document of the college communicates best the mechanical devices of an education and their apparent pre-eminent importance in the view of the institution. If this major document is confused or distorted, what may be fairly inferred about the college's actions and the consistency of their direction?

And what about the aims of the individual teacher? Does he ask, "Do I really know what I am doing? What are *my* aims in teaching? Am I simply purveying information (or drilling in a skill) — or am I truly instructing; and what do I mean by the act of instruction? What developmental purposes do my assignments, quizzes, or projects serve? How do I *know* that these purposes are being served? How realistically do I know what kind of mental activity is going on in my students? How much should I ask my students to do? Are my assignments tough because they are long; or are they tough because they demand that a student learn a new skill or derive a new insight? What do my examinations prove? What, precisely, do they evaluate?"

Do we, as professionals, as a group, have any clear ideas as to what constitutes good teaching? How do we evaluate such teaching? These two questions, in my judgment, are particularly crucial for junior colleges, since we are frankly teaching institutions whose aims are to turn out either employable graduates or graduates who are equipped for further study in senior institutions. The quality of teaching which we provide our students is directly related to success — or failure — in the accomplishment of the aims we state for ourselves.

This question of aims — and how we reach them — is so important that I want to stay with it for a moment longer. In the course of hundreds of confidential interviews with thoughtful junior college faculty, many admitted frankly that they were unsure not only of their own aims but of the aims of their individual colleges. One of them said, "This place reminds me of Stephen Leacock's famous line: 'He mounted his horse and galloped off in all directions.' Now take my situation. Here I am teaching English in a community college. But I ask myself increasingly, am I teaching the right things, the needed things, the essential things — I mean *for these students?*" This same basic question, adapted in emphasis to every discipline, including technical and vocational fields, was posed again and again: Are we teaching the appropriate things? The essential things? How do we *know* that we are? How do we increase

the sheer efficiency of our instruction? Exactly what is this college set up to do — and what is my contribution to these stated aims? What part have I got in the basic decisions? (I am reminded of a jingle by an anonymous nineteenth-century versifier:

> The centipede was happy, until the snail, in fun,
> Inquired which leg came after which?
> Which worked his mind to such a pitch,
> He lay astride the ditch,
> Considering how to run.)

Another aspect of my same basic point is this: if the college is unsure or confused in its purposes, in its definition of its mission, it is likely that the teacher will be unsure. The teacher who is not convinced of the worthiness of the direction of his college — or who misunderstands it — is likely to be uneasy, often quarrelsome and rebellious, and prone to go about his job with a certain sullen self-pity. If such is the case on a campus, it indicates a real communication breakdown between administration and faculty. It reminds me of the ancient story of the two cross-eyed men who bumped into one another on the street. "Why the hell don't you *look* where you're going?" snarled the first cross-eyed man. "Why the hell don't you *go* where you're looking?" retorted the other. Tension between administration and faculty has many causes; but one of the chief ones, perhaps, is the disposition to look cross-eyed at the same set of facts.

This brings me to my second major point: namely, that the lines between faculty and administration — in whatever areas — are bound to blur and become less definite than they have been in the past. Historically, junior colleges have been administrators' institutions, with all major decisions — even, in some colleges, the less major decisions, such as what textbooks to order, and the like — made by administrators. Again, in the recent past, some of this has resulted from the intellectual and operational habits of former school principals and superintendents who became junior college presidents and deans. But across the nation, the trend is toward greater and greater faculty participation in the running of junior colleges, in all major aspects, including basic policy-making.

However, greater faculty participation in governance requires a new set of responsibilities, and a new set of understandings, both by teachers and by administrators. The individual teacher, for example, can no longer simply say, "Look, my job is to teach history; and the administration's job is to give me the tools and conditions to teach, and then let me alone." If the faculty member wants a say in the direction of the college, he has got to learn to think in wider terms: he's got to learn to think as an educator, and not just as a "subject man." In practice, too, this means that he must be willing to spend time and energy on committee work and on institutional activity that may not seem to have any direct connection with his instruction.

For his part, the administrator needs to take a fresh and perhaps less paternal look at his faculty. He needs to accept the fact that his teaching staff, properly approached, can be his major *resource* — in advice, fact-gathering, insight, and college development. It is the simple truth that a faculty which knows in detail and for sure *what is going on* at every level of a college, is usually a hard-working, cooperative teaching group, with high morale and a flexible willingness to experiment. And an administrator doesn't create this happy situation by writing memorandums. Rather, he encourages much *shared activity* (a phrase which could be translated as "good communication") in the facing and solving of college-wide problems. At the same time, he recognizes — or should recognize — that committee work, special assignments, and other non-teaching duties, should *not* be piled on top of what are typically heavy teaching schedules; but that adequate provision must be made for faculty time and energy to be profitably spent — not resentfully spent — on behalf of the college as a whole.

One of the myth-ideals in the junior college movement is that because we are frankly teaching institutions, the quality of instruction in our colleges is somehow "better" than that in

the lower divisions of most four-year colleges. I have seen very little evidence — and much wishful thinking — to give substance to this myth.

For example, let me point this question toward the individual faculty member. Does he have any realistic idea *how* his students learn? What does he know about the process? How is he sure *what* his students have learned? Has he taken pains to try to determine and to assess his own intellectual and personal strengths — and weaknesses — so that he is using *himself* most effectively in his teaching? These are not idle questions; nor are they meant to be "psychiatric" by implication. I think they are at the heart of the teaching-learning transaction.

For example, last year I spent ten days on the campus of a junior college generally considered to be an excellent one; and I was cordially invited to visit the classes of an English teacher who, the dean told me, was "one of our top instructors." Over one week, I spent twelve hours in this man's classes. Here's what happened in one of them, and I assure you that my description typifies the week. Class began on time. He took the roll — three minutes. He then described a forthcoming term-paper assignment this way: exact number of pages required; a grade on the outline; a grade on the first draft; a grade for the final results. Persistent reference was made to the fact that most of the students would be transferring, and four-year colleges demanded many term papers. Grading, the class was assured repeatedly, would be "rough" — so that "you can begin to have a notion of the kind of standards that will be required of you." This process took 19 minutes. He then turned to the blackboard and suggested four major approaches to the term paper — suitable, he said, "for almost any topic." He was careful and thorough, and the students took busy notes. This segment took 21 minutes. The instructor then stated that it was "O.K. to write this paper for another course, since it's the *form* we're interested in." And he said brightly, "That's pretty practical, because that way you can earn a grade for *two* instructors." He then said, "Are there any questions?" There were no questions. Indeed, not one student had said a word for the past 43 minutes. Class finished with the instructor stating that "next time we're going to cover outlining, review paragraphs, analyze thesis statements. Then next week . . ." and he described next week. The bell rang. And sure enough, "next time," and "next week," he did exactly as he said he would.

I think it is both germane and fair to ask whether this instructor had any idea what he was really doing.

Again, a brief anecdote. Large community college, with good reputation. Sophomore course: History of Western Civilization. Text: standard compendium volume of excerpts ranging from Xenophon to Eisenhower. Instructor with M.A. and A.B.D. (All-But-Dissertation) from a good university. Thirty-four students in class. Time of year: February. The class has reached the Renaissance. Under presumptive discussion: Machiavelli's *The Prince* (or rather, 28 pages excerpted from *The Prince*). Bell rings. Roll is taken in jolly fashion, with instructor commenting on missing students. Time elapsed: seven minutes. First question from instructor: "Who knows what the expression 'Machiavellian' means?" Hands are raised, 14 minutes are consumed by various comments, all permissively accepted by the instructor, the upshot being, I gathered, that "Machiavellian" meant "like Machiavelli." That settled *that*. The instructor then lectured for 17 minutes about the Renaissance as a "state of mind," though exactly what the state was came through in muddy fashion, since the lecture was interspersed with personal anecdotes about the teacher's "power relationships" (his phrase) with his first sergeant during a certain phase of training during the Korean War. I gathered that the instructor, then a corporal, really psyched out his first sarge.

A raised student hand brought the question, "What is the Monday quiz going to cover?" The instructor was glad the question was asked because the ensuing 12 minutes taped down that quiz until even the dullest student knew he had better read the Machiavelli pages, *at least*. The bell rang on that ineffable conclusion.

A few years ago, Jacques Barzun of Columbia suggested that the liberal arts in this country were moribund. Everybody heard him, and few people listened to him. The ones who listened least were faculty, because they had vested interests to protect, ingrained habits to defend.

Yet how long has it been since you have asked yourselves — and your colleagues — a few pointed and essentially simple questions: *Why* am I teaching this course? Are my assignments and the sequences of learning experiences carefully thought out for maximum value to the *kind of student* I am instructing? What, quite pragmatically, is the *value* of this material for these students — and how do I convince them (as well as myself) of its value? What is the nature of the educational experience I am asking my students to commit themselves to?

Teaching liberal arts in the junior college is, I am convinced, a unique problem in higher education. (I was about to say "challenge," but that word has lost the value of its coinage in the middens of our peculiar jargon.) Such teaching, furthermore, is imperatively required to become uniquely better — more relevant and exciting — as the junior college takes more and more of the freshman-sophomore population in this country. BUT — and the qualification is a very large one — it is feckless, tiresome, and naive to prate about "uniqueness" and "innovation" in our solving of this problem when, in all candor, there appears to be little in what we currently do in liberal arts instruction to merit the description. The melancholy fact seems to be that liberal arts teaching is the same old stuff, presented in the same old way, with the only real changes from medieval times being that students have plenty of books, some visual aids, and more paper to waste.

Let me state the urgency of the problem as a basic question: do we know, with ruthless clarity, what we mean by "general education" or even by "liberal arts," or are we assuming that if we copy the lower-division curricula of four-year institutions we are offering such education? More specifically: have we, as teachers, thought through the function, the utility, and thus the *nature* of general education in the matrix of this society in the late 1960's? What sort of general education is going to be of most help to the student so that he will have a useful, operational awareness of the cultural, socio-economic, technical environment he lives in *now*? What sort of general education should we be providing for our students so that they can feel *effectively at home*, both in our own pluralistic, technical society, and in the multi-cultured society of this tiny planet of warring neighborhoods?

Let me pose this question from another angle. The liberal arts, of course, include man's record of his exploration into himself, into his relations with his fellows, into his physical world, into his quest for the eternal. This record is literature, the fine arts, social history, the sciences. The question is, not whether this record should be a part of a student's knowledge, but *whether it is being taught as relevant to him now, to his insistent present.* I submit that, with rare exceptions, it is not being so taught; but it is too often thought of by liberal arts teachers as accumulated knowledge, cultural background, or — worse — "intellectual enrichment."

Still worse: if we teach our transfer students the materials of general education in ways usually stipulated as acceptable by senior institutions, we are hitching our colleges to moribund concepts and practices that were little good thirty years ago, and are positively feckless and frivolous today. Indeed, I can hardly think of a more effective way to destroy our students' interest in the liberal arts than to teach them as "courses designed for transfer." For example, too much faith is still pinned on the pedagogically indefensible assumption that general education in the freshman-sophomore years should be based upon introductory and survey courses, those dreadful, rag-tag-and-rubbish snippets of knowledge which succeed in doing nothing but misleading students about the real nature of knowledge by allowing them to assume that it can be surveyed. Further, it introduces them to — and rewards them for — a method of "learning" which is unerringly designed to reward memory, rote, easy generalization, and intellectual dependence upon textbook and instructor.

We in the junior colleges have a wonderful opportunity — right now — to rescue general education, to bring it once again to relevance. Indeed, we *must* do so if we are not to slide into the lock-step of higher education as a two-year segment of the larger battalions. Statistically, two-thirds of junior college students do *not* transfer, for example — and this proportion is likely to remain fairly stable in the coming few years. This means that in our institutions we've got only two years to produce reasonably educated — as well as trained — people; and by educated people, I don't mean copies of university professors. I mean people who can operate with some fluency, comfort, and effectiveness in a largely urbanized, machine-served, mass-media society; persons whose general education has been thoughtfully designed to help them at least begin to learn the means of continuing personal growth in an increasingly depersonalized society.

This is a staggering assignment; and we haven't long to learn how to do it right. And the person who, most of all, has to learn how to do it is the individual teacher in the liberal arts — the humanities.

"Liberal" means "generous" — and "liberal" means "free." My hope for us — for you — at this conference, and for those at the next ones, is that we can relate to one another and to our problems freely and generously. If I may, as a last word or two, suggest to you some brief ground rules for your work here — ground rules which have been successfully used by other groups like this — they would be:

— Within the limits of good taste and common courtesy, try to be as open and frank in your discussions as you can. We are not here to impress one another, nor to grind any particular axes, either institutional or personal. Hopefully, we will *learn* from one another; and this requires openness and the expression of feelings as well as of thoughts.

— Do, please, try as hard as you can to drop any defensiveness, any wariness about committing yourself to open discussion. No one here is making any judgments, either of you or of your college. It will be better to be bluntly specific than spongily and politely general. Most generalizations don't pin anything down any better than rubber thumbtacks.

— Please *be patient,* both with your discussion leaders and with yourselves. This is, truly, an exploratory conference; and honest exploration guarantees nothing but an experience. If your experience is like that of many groups that have had the courage to try this kind of unstructured situation, you may feel that we're not getting anywhere, that we're just tilting windmills, and you may wonder, "What are we getting out of this, anyhow?" Be patient. You may be pleasantly surprised at a new insight, a new awareness.

— Finally: avoid jargon — and help your colleagues avoid it. Beware the easy answer, the defensive rationalization, for these breed upon one another and multiply to a formidable dullness. I pass on to you one of Aldous Huxley's quips: "I wandered for hours through swamps of generalities, though once in a while, there was the blessed relief of a concrete fact, like a tussock of firm ground in the muck."

Good searching — good exploring — and may this conference set a tone of excitement and expectation for many others to follow.

SECTION 3

JUNIOR COLLEGE MISSIONS: Faculty Perspectives

REPORT OF DISCUSSION GROUP I

David M. Dorsey, Willmar State Junior College, Group Leader
Linton R. Lehrer, Willmar State Junior College, Recorder

The objectives of the conference did not include reaching conclusions and finding solutions (at least in the judgment of this recorder), although some may have been reached in the process of group interaction. Therefore, in light of this interpretation, this report is presented mainly in the form of questions and reactions that arose during the deliberations of the group.

Monday

1. Why do we offer liberal arts education in the junior college? How do we defend or justify these offerings? Why should we have to *justify?*
2. Terminal versus transfer students and courses:
   a. Is it necessary to offer different types of courses for terminal and transfer students? Reaction: "I am critical of these people who think you have to have two tracks. There is too much emphasis on getting the inferior students into classes with other inferior students!" Reaction: "If we feel that what is being done for transfer students is good, why not give the non-transfer students the same things?"
   b. Are we too traditional in setting up course programs? Why make course requirements so specific and rigid? Reaction: State colleges give an Associate degree without specific credit requirements.
   c. Are we concerned with a student's getting a degree or with his education?
   d. Do we have an obligation to offer courses students want as opposed to what they need?
   e. How are you going to get through to administrators and other institutions, such as the four-year colleges and the University, to make course requirements less rigid?
   f. How do colleges decide what their curriculum should be?
   g. What is the function of a survey or introductory course?
3. What is good teaching?
   a. Should we "mold" students into what we think they should be, or should we allow them to experiment and explore?
   b. How do you know when someone is competent to teach? Reaction: "I *enjoy* teaching my subject. In a sense I am teaching for myself — my own self-satisfaction." Reaction: "If a course has ever inspired you, what has stood out above all else? The teacher! Maybe we should have a catalog with descriptions of instructors."
4. Grades — a necessary evil? Why not more pass/no credit courses?
5. Junior college staff members are not able to have face-to-face confrontation for exchange of ideas often enough with other college staff members. This is one limitation of the junior college.
6. In the makeup of our individual courses, why shouldn't we take into consideration the desires of students for course content? Everyone knows that students perform better when they are doing what they are interested in. Obviously the instructor must have a voice in

what type of subject matter should be learned, but do we offer the students any choice? Couldn't we make our course content more flexible, tuned more to the desires of the students? Reaction: We shouldn't knuckle under to students. Reaction: We are not necessarily "knuckling under" when we allow them more freedom of choice.

Tuesday

Tuesday's session was exceptionally satisfying. Somehow, out of the clouds of doubt and insecurity of the first day and a half, we felt a sense of accomplishment.

Here are the questions we explored — again without complete agreement:

1. Is there something unique about the junior college instructor?
2. What are teaching methods and techniques that you (individual group members) have used that can be effective?
3. Pass/no credit courses — we decided we would like to know more about this from the University, where this system is used in certain colleges.
4. We decided it would be valuable to have interchange of instructors among junior colleges, especially between the out-state and metropolitan institutions.
5. What attracts junior college instructors to their positions?
6. How do you approach subject matter to make it meaningful to students?
7. What is the purpose of an examination? We agreed that an exam *should* be related to the objectives of the course.
8. The group was not in complete agreement about Mr. Garrison's idea of abolishing survey courses.
9. There was a concern about the supply of teachers for junior colleges after hearing Mr. Garrison's almost alarming statistics about the increase in junior college students in the next seven years.
10. We discussed the new program at one of the Minnesota state colleges which is supposed to prepare people for junior college instruction. The question was raised whether the initiators of the program had conferred with junior college people in their planning.
11. We discussed the junior college internship program at the University of Minnesota.

Group I Participants

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Verlyn Heldt, Rochester State Junior College, Dean of Instruction
Leon Knight, North Hennepin State Junior College, English and Journalism
Ruth Ann Lorenzen, Anoka-Ramsey State Junior College, Music
Tyne Mike, Itasca State Junior College, Art
Phillip Nielsen, General College, English
Sister M. Marcella Nolan, Corbett Junior College, English

REPORT OF DISCUSSION GROUP II

Donald Durand, North Hennepin State Junior College, Group Leader
Margaret Wangensteen, Anoka-Ramsey State Junior College, Recorder

"What are the aims of the junior colleges?" and "What is the ideal junior college?" were the two questions most thoroughly discussed by the group on the first day of the conference. The group soon agreed that to our knowledge neither the Legislature nor the Junior College Board had made clear what the aims and goals of this system were. We decided that perhaps it was at least partially up to us as faculty to help determine what they should be. In addition, most of us thought that students should also be consulted on this question.

In attempting to answer our questions, we agreed it was essential to look at our students. We asked ourselves, "What kind of student enrolls in the junior college and why does he come?" Several out-state representatives reported that many of their students attended local junior colleges because they didn't want to leave home and/or because they couldn't afford to go away. Cost was also a factor for metropolitan-area students. Both metropolitan and out-state junior college representatives indicated that numerous students came to the junior college because their poor grades and/or low high-school rank barred their entrance to other schools. It was also noted that some students came to the junior colleges because they preferred a small school where they hoped to receive more individual attention. Finally, it was pointed out that while some students are capable of transferring, and do transfer, to four-year colleges, almost two-thirds do not.

These facts led us into a discussion of the types of courses we should offer these students. We eventually began to agree that the junior college should do more than offer a transfer-level curriculum. Two other courses of study were suggested as appropriate. One was a vocational-technical curriculum. A group member pointed out that the junior college was an ideal spot for educating the middle man, the man between the professional and the skilled laborer. For example, junior colleges could train x-ray technicians, library technicians, and two-year nurses. Further, it was thought that a junior college setting could give a person an opportunity to combine vocational training with more general education. This combination should help him develop into a more well-rounded person who is more able to cope with and enjoy his increasingly complex society. It was pointed out that a state commission on higher education was studying the relationships of various educational bodies in the state. Hopefully, they will investigate the junior college's relationship to the vocational-technical school.

The second course of study suggested as being appropriate for the junior college was a general education curriculum. This course of study would not be designed specifically to prepare a person for a job or for transfer. Rather, it would offer *anyone* who wanted it, regardless of high-school rank, etc., an opportunity for two years of liberal education and personal development on the college level. As a supplement to the above courses of study, the group agreed that the junior college should offer adult education courses either through a night school or an extension division.* These courses could be either for college credit or just for personal enrichment. Several group members thought the state should help fund such programs so they wouldn't be completely dependent on tuition.

Our discussion of appropriate programs led us into a discussion of the track system. It was suggested this system might be adopted by all junior colleges as a means for jointly handling the transfer, vocational, and general education programs. A few schools already have such track systems, which seem to be working quite well. At the same time, some questions were raised which suggested possible problems that could arise in a track system.

a. Would a student be forced into one track or another because of grades, etc., and thereby lose his freedom of choice? (The schools that had tracks said this was not now the case.)

* After the conference, one member suggested that such extension courses could also be offered on Saturday.

b. Would the tracks become inflexible? Would a student be able to transfer out of a track once he got into it? Could a student take a course offered in a track other than the one in which he was registered? (Some of those who now have tracks said they were quite flexible.)

c. How would we determine for which track a course was suitable?

d. Would the transfer track become so concerned with the requirements and prerequisites of transfer institutions that only such courses would be offered to the students in this track?

e. Would the general education track offer only a limited number of courses?

f. Should the same degree be given for all tracks of study?

Many in the group supported the track system and thought the problems indicated by the above questions could be avoided or overcome. Others believed a definite track system was not necessary to handle the three curriculums efficiently and effectively.

This discussion of a proposed curriculum expansion, coupled with the knowledge that junior colleges are developing rapidly, led us into a discussion of faculty availability. It was suggested that perhaps we could enlarge our faculties — or at least the areas of specialization they represented — by exchanging instructors for a few weeks or a quarter, or by sharing an instructor among several campuses. It was also suggested that we could share "experts" via educational television and video tape.

We also discussed faculty preparation. Primarily, four suggestions were made. The first was that it would be very valuable to send faculty members to other colleges around the state and/or the country to observe programs and teaching methods at these schools. The second was that it might be very valuable to set up an internship-teacher training program for new junior college instructors. The people from General College told us that graduate students are on their staff in an internship capacity. These students are paid to teach several classes. Their teaching is guided and supervised by someone experienced in the field of teaching. The group thought such on-the-job guidance might better prepare people to teach in junior college. Further, it was suggested that the junior colleges might do both themselves and the baccalaureate institutions a service if we would tell them what kind of teachers we need and what kind of training we thought these people should have. Finally, it was suggested that more money and time should be made available to instructors who wish to take additional courses or attend summer institutes.

Several other subjects were also briefly touched on by the group during the first day of the conference. We discussed the merits of survey courses. Some wondered if some survey courses, such as American literature, would transfer, since most four-year schools offer them only in the upper division. Some voiced the opinion that such courses should be offered to give students exposure to these areas of study. It was again pointed out that many of our students don't transfer.

In addition to survey courses, we also discussed whether or not our composition and speech courses were stressing form more than content or vice versa. In conjunction with this, some questioned the relevance of teaching the research paper in freshman English. It was pointed out that today many courses at four-year colleges don't require research papers. Further, we briefly discussed whether or not there should be any continuity (standardization) among teachers teaching the same course. Most of us agreed that instructors teaching the same course should not be forced to use exactly the same classroom format and teaching methods. Some of the group did, however, feel that for the sake of the students, the teachers should have common goals. We all agreed that, whatever methods were used, we should attempt to stimulate and excite our students and try to help them perform with greater confidence and competence.

We ended the day eager for the second day of meetings.

We began the second day of the conference discussing the use of audio-visual aids in the classroom. We all agreed that we needed to be more aware of what was available to us in this area. Several sources of audio-visual material were suggested. Some schools said they rented tapes and movies from the University's Audio-Visual Extension Division. Unfortunately, this source is very popular, and it is sometimes difficult to reserve and get the needed material. Two other University services in this area were also pointed out. The University has courses for training people to run audio-visual equipment. It also has a technical center on its St. Paul campus that reproduces slides for other educational institutions. Several schools said they were attempting to develop their own slide libraries, but some indicated they had trouble getting enough money to buy all the necessary material.

We soon recognized that each school could not afford to build a complete audio-visual library containing all the material they thought would be useful. It was suggested that a central audio-visual center (or bank) be established to help solve this problem. The center could buy slides, video tapes, movies, etc., and loan them to the schools. There could be one center or several regional centers. In the long run, this might be less expensive than having each college pay rental fees to various companies.

During our discussion the idea of an audio-visual center soon expanded into an idea for a junior college center. The group envisioned this center as both a building and a concept. It thought the center could serve and be supported by both state and private junior colleges and should be an independent body, not an arm of the University or some such body. It was suggested that the center could be housed, temporarily at least, in a vacant school or office building.

Numerous suggestions were made as to just what the functions of such a center could be.

1. It could house an audio-visual bank for movies, tapes, video tapes, slides, etc.
2. It could have a place for, and sponsor, institutes and conferences for junior college faculty, administrators, and students.
3. It could have a faculty senate made up of representatives from all the colleges in the state. This body would make decisions on policies which affected all the colleges. For example, the senate could discuss and act on such matters as common graduation requirements, the kinds of degrees granted by junior colleges, etc. This body should also have something to say about any funds the center might distribute.
4. It could have staff members who would both investigate possible sources of income and try to secure funds for center programs. Such programs could include conferences, summer institutes, in-service internship programs, additional graduate study for faculty, visitations to other colleges, student trips to plays and art galleries, etc. Center programs could be developed to help the administration, students, and faculty alike.

Our group endorsed the creation of a group to study the possibility of developing such a center.

In addition to discussing the possibility of developing a junior college center, the group also discussed the possibility of developing new technical-vocational courses of study. Our discussion of audio-visual materials and equipment made us aware of the need we all had for someone besides the overworked librarian to run the audio-visual equipment and to prepare audio-visual material such as transparencies and video tapes. It was suggested that, if this need were widespread, the junior colleges could develop a program to train audio-visual technicians. Other programs were also suggested. Some people from out-state schools said that the people in their local areas might profit from two-year degree programs in forestry and agriculture. It was further suggested that each of us should urge his colleagues to examine the needs of our separate geographical areas to determine what other types of special programs might be appropriate to each area.

Another topic which we discussed was an internship program for new junior college instructors. The group made it clear they were not asking for additional college course requirements in teaching methods or educational philosophy. Several internship plans were suggested.

1. We could adopt the UCLA plan. There, new people come in with their M.A.'s as full-time, paid instructors. During their first year they're required to attend summer institutes and Saturday conferences which deal with teaching in the college setting.
2. New teachers could be hired at full pay but would teach only ½ to ⅔ of a full load. The remainder of their time could be given over to institutes, conferences, and individual meetings with experienced teachers who have been assigned to supervise them. Perhaps under such a system the school would pay ½ to ⅔ of the salary and the state the rest.
3. Students planning to teach at a junior college could go out and do a quarter of supervised "student teaching" at a junior college just before securing their degrees. They would be given some financial remuneration for this.

Before closing the discussion for the day, the group briefly talked about the pass/no credit grading system. Several questions were raised. For example, some wondered whether or not such a system would cause students to be less motivated. Others wondered if courses taken under a pass/no credit system would transfer to another institution. Some endorsed the system, saying they thought it might encourage students to take courses they would otherwise have avoided. Most felt that, if such a system were used, students should be permitted to complete only a certain percent of their total credits on a pass/no credit basis.

We closed our discussion reluctantly, grateful for this opportunity for self-examination and, hopefully, improvement.

Group II Participants

Donald Durand (Group Leader), North Hennepin State Junior College, Speech and Theatre
Margaret Wangensteen (Recorder), Anoka-Ramsey State Junior College, Speech
Roger Claesgens, St. Mary's Junior College, Fine Arts
Lorraine Cline, Fergus Falls State Junior College, Librarian
F. Faith Finnberg, General College, English and Literature
Edward Gordon, Worthington State Junior College, Speech and Drama
Nancy Helleloid, Rainy River State Junior College, Librarian
Wallace H. Hustad, Golden Valley Lutheran College, Sociology
Donald Jackson, Brainerd State Junior College, Music
J. Rodney Kellar, Austin State Junior College, Humanities
Charles McKeehan, Rochester State Junior College, English and Literature
Leon Reisman, General College, Literature, Writing, and Speech
Charles Rowland, Mesabi State Junior College, English and Drama

REPORT OF DISCUSSION GROUP III

Orville Olson, Hibbing State Junior College, Group Leader
Delores A. Lakso, Mesabi State Junior College, Recorder

In the development and growth of any organization, those involved need an opportunity to pause to evaluate what they are doing. This junior college conference gave us in the junior colleges of Minnesota the opportunity to take such a necessary pause. The conference gave us the opportunity to take a good look at ourselves, to see what we are doing and why we are doing it, to evaluate our junior college and our work in it. Such a process of self-analysis depends on questions, questions sharply directed and honestly answered. We asked ourselves such questions and probed for answers, and although we found that we did not have the answers for most of the questions, and that when we did we did not agree with the answers offered, we nonetheless had much to think about. We had our set opinions challenged, our cherished ideas evaluated, and our prize procedures questioned — and we gained new insights into ourselves as teachers and into our institutions.

The first area we discussed centered on the junior colleges as institutions and on our roles as teachers in them. We asked ourselves: What are the aims of the junior colleges? What are their relationships to other institutions of higher education? What are the aims of *your* junior college? And just what are *you* trying to accomplish?

Our discussion of the above questions brought out several points. We noted that at present there are two kinds of junior colleges in the state — those that have primarily vocational-terminal students and those that have primarily transfer students. Although the newest schools have chiefly the vocational-terminal students, all the junior colleges are providing more and more courses for such students. We did agree that the junior colleges should be comprehensive schools. In discussing just what kinds of students attend our colleges, we noted that about seventy percent were actually terminal students — though many students do not consider themselves such — and that at present we are not meeting the needs of these students. Increasing the number of course offerings is not the answer; we must determine what courses these students need. We noted that we as teachers often teach what we want to teach rather that what the students need. To meet the needs of students we must cooperate with the vocational schools and they with us. Even in the junior colleges which have many students in vocational-terminal and in academic courses, we felt that there was very little connection between these areas.

If we are trying to educate all types of students, we need more flexible scheduling, we need a freer way of granting credits for courses, we need to give students more freedom in the selection of their courses, and we need to be concerned about students and not our special convenience or interests in determining what courses we offer. We felt that the problem of transferring courses to four-year colleges was a hindrance to our offering new courses and modifying established ones. We noted that we often teach courses as we ourselves were taught as transfer or upper-division students and that students, too, are oriented to the transfer idea. We made a proposal that a committee of academic deans, counselors, and other qualified junior college personnel be formed to meet with similar representatives from the four-year schools to study the transfer problem.

Since it is impossible for our schools to cover all areas of students' educational needs — once we have determined, if we can, what those needs are — we should find out which areas are the most essential. We noted that certain courses are already in the curriculum, the need for such having been determined by administrators, by faculty, by the public; such courses thus become students' needs. English composition and physical education are such courses. We asked: Why isn't art a required course? or music? And why do we make the assumption that certain people are the only ones qualified to teach some courses? Why do persons who have a background in English literature teach composition? Why not let someone with a background

in, for example, history teach composition? We felt that we must examine our rigid patterns to see what should and could be changed, such as structuring courses to allow students to come in at any time instead of at the beginning of a present sequence course, and setting up interdisciplinary courses. We also felt that, as our culture becomes more and more sophisticated, other courses such as art will probably become required courses.

A second area of discussion related to the central question: Just what is good teaching? We asked ourselves: Why are you teaching your course? What do you expect your students to gain from it? How do you organize your course? How do you evaluate what the students gain from it?

After much discussion we generalized that good teaching should teach students to see, to gain perspective, to communicate with others. Good teaching should get students to feel the excitement of ideas, and getting them to do so is the hardest kind of teaching. From their involvement with ideas comes their awareness of their own needs. Good teaching centers on the revelation of form and structure as a means of getting a student to see: to see, for example, the structure and discipline in prose and in art. Form is one of the keys of teaching. Starting with a simple form leads the student to recognize the importance of structure and to realize what is happening. With the proliferation of knowledge, giving a student structure and form gives him the means to handle new ideas. Good teaching requires spontaneity and flexibility on the part of the teacher. Good teaching should essentially allow a teacher to disappear in a course.

We recognized the fact that students do have a culture and that to reach them we must bridge the gap between their culture and the traditional one we teach. The language of students is a part of that culture and we should accept it, with the caution that sensibilities of others, social circumstances, and good judgment do govern language usage. We also recognized the changes that have occurred in our culture where new attitudes allow greater freedom for teachers, as in discussion of literature dealing with sex.

In our discussion of methods of organizing classes we did not agree whether a system in which students are divided into two, three, or more tracks in a subject-matter area is better than a system in which students are not so divided. The advantages of the track system which we recognized are that the students can choose the courses that best fit their needs, that they can change to a different track if they so desire, and that they have an opportunity to succeed and gain recognition for achievement. The advantage of the other system is that good students can provide the spark to ignite the interests of the weaker students. We briefly discussed the survey courses as opposed to those organized around a particular theme, but we did not agree as to which was better.

In discussing our methods of evaluating students' achievement, we questioned whether we really do have a need for academic standards as represented by grades, and if we do have such a need, whether it is based on the needs of twenty years ago or on the needs of today, and whether all students should have to meet those standards. We felt that an ambivalent attitude exists on the part of both teachers and students about grades, with the problem created by the conflict between the needs of students and the traditional need for grades to win scholarships, to gain admittance to graduate school, and to gain recognition for achievement. We decided that not all courses require grades, that we could use the pass/no credit system for courses not in the major and minor fields of the student. Under such a system students would be encouraged to take courses in fields they feel they are weak in and not jeopardize their grades. Academic honors are still important in the individual's need for recognition. And, furthermore, if a student feels a need for a course, his *B* or *C* grade may be more valuable to him than an *A* in another course. To the question, "Are we emphasizing grades?" we answered, "Yes," but asked, "What is the alternative?"

The third area of discussion dealt with changing courses and making innovations. We tried to answer the question: How would you change your courses if there were no restrictions

such as those imposed by the lack of money, the rigidity of schedules, and, for some courses, the need to meet requirements of transfer? Among changes we suggested were the following: (1) the transportation of students to cultural events — to the theater, museums, concerts, art shows — even for several days at a time; (2) more studio courses; (3) more audio-visual material and new uses for such; (4) smaller classes instead of the larger ones we are now getting; (5) team teaching, with each teacher working with the class for several days if necessary and then being allowed time to correct papers and to evaluate the students' work before meeting the class again; (6) the service of audio-visual technicians to set up and maintain equipment; (7) flexibility in scheduling; and (8) interdisciplinary courses. We felt that mechanical devices such as television should not and could not replace the vital face-to-face meeting between students and teachers and that it should not replace the necessity of student participation in class. The medium must not be in control. We recommended that we try to get more money to give students access to more cultural and educational events and that we have more autonomy on the local level as to the uses of money.

The end of the discussion brought the realization that we had disagreed as much as we had agreed, that we had not arrived at answers, that we had opened the door to further discussion. And that brought the idea that other such conferences should be held to discuss more specific questions and to study specific problems. This conference was a good beginning.

Group III Participants

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Lawrence Cullen, North Hennepin State Junior College, Librarian
Phillip DeWolfe, Anoka-Ramsey State Junior College, English
James Hiner, Vermilion State Junior College, English and Speech
Iletta Holman, Rochester State Junior College, Art
Rudolph Honsey, Bethany Lutheran College, Foreign Languages
Audrey Parish, Metropolitan State Junior College, Humanities
Mary L. Wyvell, General College, English and Literature

REPORT OF DISCUSSION GROUP IV

Fred M. Amram, General College, Group Leader
C. David Brookbank, Lakewood State Junior College, Recorder

Most teachers claim to be able to distinguish intelligent, creative, motivated, serious students from those less favored: "Some kids flunk out; that proves they're different." Some teachers are aware that students also share common qualities. Rarely having been called upon to recognize these binding ties, however, teachers remain largely unaware of the implication of their quiescent knowledge.

It was with recognition, ranging from whole-hearted to grudging, that students are different yet alike, that Group Four of the Junior College Faculty Conference concluded its initial discussion on Sunday evening, January 14. This recognition affected the group's Monday and Tuesday discussions of junior college teachers and the role they play, or should play, in educating these paradoxical creatures.

At its Monday morning session, the group agreed, tentatively, that students in any given class have these characteristics in common: they are all human beings and hence share the same drives and needs; they are high-school graduates who speak a common language and share a common heritage; they attend the same institution, take the same course, have the same teacher, and want to complete the course successfully; they are curious. Some panelists called one of the similarities a difference: "They don't speak the same language." Within a single classroom, there are students who do not understand each other. Some are able to speak, or at least understand, the teacher's "language," and others cannot. Presumably, the teacher is at as much of a loss to understand the language of some students as they are to understand his. (Bob Dylan, who is comprehended by most students, is not understood by some teachers; but since there are some teachers who don't even listen to Bob Dylan, they might be wise to complete the "assignments," unuttered but not unmade by their students.)

For some discussants, the "language differential" loomed large enough to reduce to insignificance the similarities, although most members were willing to grant at least lip service to the significance of the multitudinous similarities. So, although the assumption that students are similar to one another might have been said to underlie the substance of the discussion which followed, it in fact did not do so; continual assumptions, sometimes tacit, but often openly stated, of dissimilarities lay behind numerous remarks. The degree of vehemence used by panelists in expressing viewpoints may be related directly, though not always clearly, to the degree to which the assumption was held, or not held, by disputants.

The substance of the remainder of the morning discussion revolved around the classroom and what goes on in it. Specifically, types of assignments and purposes of assignments were discussed. Two questions engaged the group's attention: Should assignments in the humanities be such that a student is exposed to knowledge, or should they require student participation? How much joy is there, or should there be, in the the classroom?

While there was general agreement that a student's knowledge and appreciation of music or theatre or art is enhanced if he plays an instrument or acts or paints, and that a player, actor, or painter benefits if he knows more about his art than merely the practice thereof, there was little agreement about what the exposure-participation ratio should be or about the value or practicality of encouraging participation in some disciplines (literature, for example) which do not lend themselves to it immediately. When asked what their students were doing while they attended the Faculty Conference, one teacher answered that she had divided her literature class into small discussion groups and that the groups were discussing in the classroom, Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience;* another teacher said her students were doing an assignment designed to make them bring evidence to her that they had learned how to locate materials in the library; a third teacher had told his students to read one of Cicero's works. A suggestion that the first teacher was effectively combining exposure with participation and that it would

behoove others to invent similar exercises met with strong but not universal disagreement. It was argued that what might work with Thoreau might not work with Cicero, for to understand the latter, students need the guidance of an instructor who can suggest the author's meaning and his relevance. If there was any agreement, it was only that the "Thoreau method" might work for some authors but not for others, for some teachers but not for others, for some students but not for others.

There was also considerable disagreement about the library assignment. One faction argued that an assignment designed only to make students learn about using libraries makes learning seem like drudgery, and that students must be so challenged by teachers to "find out" that they will be motivated to discover library resources, without benefit of a specific library assignment. The other faction argued that many instructors found it impossible to create so strong a desire for knowledge that all students would try to "find out."

Although several discussants insisted that a little drudgery (sometimes called "work") never hurt anyone, all agreed, at least in principle, that learning should be joyful. Questions such as the following were asked and sometimes discussed but not answered:

1. Does it matter whether a student enjoys a particular course?
2. Can a good teacher make "unenjoyable" subjects enjoyable? Should he? Does it make any difference?
3. What about the student who finds joy in a subject not in the classroom, but years later, long after he has "had the course"?
4. Should a teacher be an entertainer?
5. Should a teacher assign readings that students will enjoy, or should he assign those that he believes a student ought to read?

The Monday afternoon session saw the introduction of a number of questions about the role of the teacher. Time limitations prevented detailed discussion of most of the questions, and the group was rarely able to reach a consensus. Perhaps the most basic question asked, and the one question upon which there seemed to be something approaching agreement, was this: "Has a teacher ever helped anyone?" "Yes," the group seemed to say, "teachers have helped, do help, and are necessary." What they are necessary for, however, was a matter for dispute. Is a teacher a grade-giving device? Is it possible for him to influence values? Is it within his province to attempt to do so? (Here, the group seemed to feel that Professor Mulford Q. Sibley, who presents points of view without propagandizing and who affects values without insisting that one value is superior to another, has arrived at a solution as satisfactory as anyone could reasonably hope for.) Is it the teacher's job to pose problems, to resolve them, or to do both? Should he teach his subject (the music and poetry of Wagner's *Ring*, for example, or "how to play a bassoon") and only his subject (avoiding the political implications of the *Ring*, or the "meaning of bassoonery")? Even if a teacher knows what his goals are, how does he know whether he attains them? Does he have time to do what he wants to do? Should he do what he wants to do, or what he thinks "ought to be done"?

Unable to agree upon answers to these questions, but able to agree that the discussion had left them frustrated and anxious, yet somehow exhilarated, the group welcomed a suggestion that each member bring to the Tuesday morning session a list of things he would do, if he could, to change himself, to change his courses, and to change education. That list of "if I could's," when transferred to the blackboard, looked like this:

1. Get better facilities, especially student work space.
2. Teachers need to improve their "hearing."
3. Teachers should be allowed to teach courses in their specialties.
4. Re-evaluate lab-hour policies of colleges.
5. More reading by teachers.

6. Institute "terminal humanities" courses.
7. Answer the questions raised at this Conference.
8. Discover student needs.
9. Sell four-year colleges on the positive aspects of junior college curricula so that transferring students will not lose credits.
10. Strive for better faculty-administration relations.
11. Ask more (in the Socratic sense)!
12. Introduce interdisciplinary courses and team teaching.
13. Help rescue disturbed students by offering special training to teachers.
14. Re-evaluate old courses and, if necessary, throw them out: "The old way is not always the best way."
15. Lecture less; discuss more.
16. Reduce the number of required courses for non-transfer students.
17. Humanize the humanities; create involvement with the present.
18. Involve the community in curriculum planning.
19. Encourage more faculty-centered planning.
20. Develop better writing programs.
21. Down with department chairmen!
22. Initiate exchange programs among junior college faculties (guest instructors).
23. No more papers! (The teacher who introduced this idea meant that teachers had too many themes to grade. It was interestingly misinterpreted by another teacher who thought it meant "break the ditto machine" so that administrators would cease distributing bulky and usually unread tomes of their own industriousness.)
24. Finance the junior colleges more adequately.
25. Have more faculty retreats.

The group was able to discuss only the first seven of the recommendations at any length, but out of the discussion emerged some fairly concrete recommendations.

1. Colleges tend to build classrooms but fail to build places for students to work. Students can study in the classroom or library and can (in some colleges) play at a student union, but they have no place to build, to create. It was suggested that teachers concerned about lack of student work space could act in two ways. First, they could present definite proposals for grants to foundations. Second, they might demand from administrators a voice in determining the kinds of space that should receive priority.

2. Teachers need to learn how to "listen" better, to pick up cues from their students. Not only does the teacher need to become sensitized to his students; he needs to become sensitized to himself. Teachers who are "tuned in" will no longer be "turned off," and their students will no longer "drop out." Furthermore, the teacher, sensitized to himself, will discover his strengths and be able to utilize them. Some members of the group presented evidence that teachers whose strength lay in the ability to innovate were discouraged (fired). Despite their protestations to the contrary, some administrators do not encourage innovation and might be made more tolerant of it if they were to participate in conferences like this one.

3. Feeling trapped by endless quarters of freshman composition and survey courses, teachers would welcome occasional opportunities to teach courses in their academic specialties. It was mentioned that General College does have a course (Creative Speech Activities) which allows teachers to teach what they want to teach. Some panelists thought a similar course might work for other departments in other junior colleges.

4. Discussants felt that administrators fail to appreciate the value of teachers teaching students to do things, for they give teachers only three hours of "credit" for teaching a five-hour

lab. Somehow, the University was blamed for the situation, since it apparently doesn't value the lab (practice) as much as it values the classroom (theory). It was suggested that a foundation grant be sought to bring University and junior college people together to re-examine the whole matter of credit and transfer of credit.

5. Teachers should read more, but they don't have time. Instead of treating teaching as a profession and keeping abreast of the current literature in their fields, they treat teaching as a trade. Teachers should also be able to demonstrate at least some of the skills they talk about, but again they don't have time. (If one teaches writing, he has no time to write.) Teachers are unwilling to "expose themselves." The teacher's dilemma is that he must devote time he might use for reading, writing, and practicing to committee work and other non-teaching duties, but if he abdicates such responsibilities to administrators, things will be worse than ever. No viable solution to the problem was articulated.

6. There was disagreement over whether there should be such a thing as a "terminal humanities" course. Discussants seemed to agree that students should not have their humanities spoon-fed to them and that it was not in the interest of either the humanities or the students to present watered-down humanities, but there was no agreement about a solution to the problem of "humanizing" less able students.

7. This three-day Conference has raised many questions but has suggested few answers.

No member of Group Four was able to provide answers that were more than tentative answers to questions, but some members did suggest methods for seeking answers:

a. Carry the questions asked here back to entire junior college faculties.

b. Arrange meetings between junior college, four-year college, and University representatives.

c. Get a grant for a junior college study center where the needs of students in the various junior colleges could be studied or which could serve as a repository for information about what junior college students are like. (Objections that such a center might serve as a haven for statisticians who would provide teachers with little usable information resulted in the following modification.)

d. Get a grant for a junior college center which could serve as a repository for information (such as letters and tape recordings) about what other junior college teachers are doing, or for what solutions they have found effective for solving problems common to teachers.

Although the closing moments of Group Four's discussion were not wholly free from pessimism ("Most people would be only half-interested [in working to improve current conditions], as they are in the crush of things."), the predominant feeling was one of accomplishment. Teachers whose reactions to problems had often not progressed beyond the "bitching stage," had met with other teachers who had similar problems; without interference from administrators, and working as a group, they had articulated those problems and even offered tentative, yet reasonable and perhaps even workable, solutions to several of them. (One participant expressed his pleasure with the Conference in different, but no less favorable, terms: "I came here cocksure and complacent and ended up really worried.") It all made one wonder why no one had ever thought of holding such a conference long before now.

Group IV Participants

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Monica Heath, Worthington State Junior College, English and Literature
Marie Matt, Rochester State Junior College, English and German
Robert Mattson, Willmar State Junior College, Art
Orville R. Moran, Austin State Junior College, English and Literature
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REPORT OF DISCUSSION GROUP V

Eugene H. LaVine, Austin State Junior College, Group Leader
Harry N. AmEnd, Austin State Junior College, Recorder

If a discussion is to be kept relevant, it should be governed by a frame of reference, something to which, in a general sense, all individual arguments can be referred. The uniqueness of the junior college problem was the central theme of Discussion Group Five, the theme to which all individual views contributed.

An attempt was made to analyze junior college courses which parallel university courses, and the transfer program in the junior colleges. The group tried to determine whether courses should be taught as they are at the university level, or whether they should be designed for the needs of the local junior college student. The following views were presented by the group:

1. The General College representative stated that General College has its own courses and designs some of its own texts.
2. Approximately 30% of the students who begin as freshmen in a junior college transfer, and only half of these finsh with a four-year degree.
3. There was discussion of two- and three-track programs designed for transfer and terminal students. The third-track program is for students who identify themselves as transfer students but who do not transfer.

The purpose of the humanities and methods of grading humanities courses were discussed, and an attempt was made to determine whether we still value the concept of the "whole man" in education, or whether this is simply myth. The following views evolved from this discussion:

1. The humanities are good intrinsically and must be considered as having value in themselves, and, therefore, value for the student.
2. Not all junior college students will develop an appreciation for the humanities.
3. A pass/no credit method of grading, as has been introduced in the General College and CLA of the University of Minnesota, may encourage students in the humanities. The advantage of this is that finer student response may be promoted if grade pressure is removed. This method may also encourage students who are interested in humanities courses but who, at the same time, are concerned about their grade-point average. If the student passes the course, he receives a passing grade *(P)* which can be presented for credit. If the student does not pass, he receives a *No Credit* grade which does not upset his grade-point average.
4. Certain disadvantages of the pass/no credit system were noted: such marks might not receive transfer credit, and students with high grades probably would not be attracted to this system.
5. There was general agreement that the pass/no credit method of grading merits consideration, since it constitutes a move away from the strict, authoritarian trend in education that has attempted to legitimize grading by implying it was scientifically accurate. An instructor who had experimented with the plan stated that students admitted to a course on this basis frequently performed better once they realized they were free from grade pressure.

We analyzed the problem of trying to determine who should teach the junior college teacher, a problem which at present has not been solved, although a few places are experimenting with the training of junior college teachers. It was noted that junior colleges have problems which may perhaps best be solved by establishing courses to introduce the prospective junior college teacher to situations he will encounter, such as the kinds of students he will be dealing with and the range of abilities and interests of these students. It was also noted

that the faculty of each junior college could develop its own program for new teachers. This program could present the problems of junior college teaching to the new teachers in the form of a faculty-prepared orientation method.

Special problems of the junior college instructor were also considered, and it was noted that quite frequently the new instructor is confused by registration methods and by the lack of student response and student participation in class discussion. The instructor is sometimes uncertain about the standards he should establish — should he teach for the transfer student or for the terminal student? Tentative conclusions were that the real concern of the teacher is for the quality of the course and a teaching method appropriate to the specific kinds of students in the classes. These concerns can best be dealt with by establishing a junior college program so that the prospective teacher has a rational basis for committing himself to that program.

Further discussion attempted to determine teaching effectiveness and presented an analysis of what the instructor is doing and why he is doing it. The following views were presented by the group:

1. True teaching effectiveness is determined through direct observation of student growth. This is not to be thought of entirely in relation to testing and compiling grades, but should involve an understanding of changes in attitudes, values, and responses.
2. Knowing how to ask proper questions is also valuable in determining teaching effectiveness. Perhaps the Socratic method of proper questioning may be essential in teaching the humanities.
3. In a practical sense, the problem of trying to determine how much the department should dictate to teachers was also analyzed.

Methods of determining proper preparation for junior college teachers were considered, and the group advanced the following views:

1. All agreed that the professional education courses as they exist at present are not suited to the needs of the junior college teacher.
2. Less emphasis should be placed upon theory, and more emphasis should be placed upon practical application.
3. If education courses are offered, they should be presented after the teacher has had some practical experience so that he knows from experience what central problems exist.
4. There was some feeling that a College of Education program for preparing junior college instructors might lead to certification.
5. An internship program should be established which, according to one suggestion, might be controlled by the Minnesota Junior College Faculty Association and could perhaps be financed through grants or funds. It was felt that such a program would constitute the most effective way of introducing the prospective instructor to the philosophy and problems of the junior college. The internship program could establish a set of principles for the junior college movement.
6. Membership in the Junior College Faculty Association should be open to private colleges and to the General College.
7. It was suggested that the recruiting of junior college teachers might begin among junior college students.

In summary, the group was of the opinion that serious consideration should be given to the preparation of the junior college teacher, and that the wisest solution to this problem might be in the form of an internship program which would endeavor to promote the uniqueness of the junior college program as one which has certain specific goals and commitments. It was felt that the humanities program might gain something through an evaluation of a different method of grading, such as the pass/no credit system. There was general agreement

that a central problem is designing curriculums for the whole range of students — a problem of particular concern for junior colleges, since the uniqueness of the junior college program should be considered in order to help students who lack ability.

Group V Participants

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Gretchen Murphy, Itasca State Junior College, English
Molly Ortman, Hibbing State Junior College, English
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Candido Zanoni, General College, Philosophy

REPORT OF DISCUSSION GROUP VI

Eugene Sorensen, Rochester State Junior College, Group Leader
Elizabeth Morehouse, Rochester State Junior College, Recorder

This report is presented in two parts: (1) summary of questions, problems, and recommendations; (2) generalizations for further study drawn from summary of group discussions and from final evaluation questionnaire.

Three primary questions evolved from the group discussions:

1. Can terminal, pre-professional, and transfer students be combined in a single class structure?
2. Is the current structure of requirements justified, and is the current course structure necessary and relevant to the individual student, or is it an arbitrary judgment of what the student should have?
3. What skills and techniques, incentives and appreciations should be incorporated into the class structure of individual disciplines?

These three questions emerged repeatedly, as the group dialogue centered on the following areas of discussion:

I. What commitment does the junior college have to the community?
   A. Type of community involvement.
      1. Regular academic and vocational offerings.
      2. Limited night class offerings, primarily vocational-technical in nature.
   B. Problems in community involvement.
      1. Availability of students.
      2. Financing staff and programs on the basis of current procedures for determining faculty allotments in individual colleges.
      3. Competition with vocational-technical schools or with community continuing-education programs.
   C. General conclusion: We cannot assess our role until we have determined the actual goals of the junior college in general and of each institution in particular, and until we have better understanding with the Junior College Board about financing of programs.

II. What problems arise in combining terminal, pre-professional, and transfer programs into a single-class approach?
   A. How do you make such a single course relevant to the vocationally oriented student?
      1. Teach only specific details and skills.
      2. Teach broader understanding and appreciation.
      3. Teach highly technical analysis suitable to major in field.
         Example: English composition, to develop specific skills or general understanding.
         a. Essays.
         b. Research paper (free or controlled).
         c. Novel, short story, poetry (technique or appreciation).
   B. What motivations in developing the course should be considered?
      1. Individual development of personality and standards.
      2. Adjustment to restrictions inherent in current approach with basic conformity to existing standards of system.

III. Is the current structure of requirements justified, and is the current course structure necessary and relevant to the individual student, or are these just arbitrary?

A. Should all requirements for graduation or certification be dropped, and should individual discipline requirements be dropped?

1. Course requirements are the end result of vested interests in building a department rather than a necessary part of education.
2. Course requirements are established to try to give the student basic skills and understanding necessary to life.
   Example: English requirements.
   a. Should the aim be to teach the student simply to communicate, or to communicate within accepted academic standards of usage?
   b. Should the aim be to establish critical thinking, or to deal with specific uses of mechanics and structure?

B. Do individual disciplines exact different standards for course content for terminal and transfer students? Example: Are criteria different for art appreciation and freshman English?

IV. What skills and techniques, incentives and appreciations should be built into courses?

A. Pure enjoyment in discovery of learning and appreciation.

B. Analysis and critical thinking to be found in in-depth investigation.

C. Specific skills as tools. Example: Music appreciation might be the best example of a combination of these approaches.

V. What should be the aims and objectives of the college and of the individual instructor in establishing course content and requirements?

A. Appreciation and enjoyment through knowledge and understanding of subject. Example: Music.

B. Awareness of self in being part of a creative scene dealing more with the result than with creation, integrating the intent or the meaning of the creator. Example: Art.

C. Specific skills and improved basic skills or general skills. Example: Pre-professional courses.

D. General conclusion: Knowledge of structure is necessary for appreciation, but complexity of that structure should be adjusted to general student type.

VI. Does the two-year student have different objectives from the four-year student, and do these objectives change according to the student's vocational goals; if so, can a unified approach be adopted in the areas of general education, specifically in the humanities?

A. Students fall into three general classifications in the junior college.

1. Academic transfer.
2. Pre-professional or professional.
3. Vocational-technical.

B. Since students have decidedly different immediate goals, depending on their programs, the humanities should be evaluated to determine the approach needed to gain the best possible application for each kind of student.

1. Humanities have intrinsic value to the student.
2. Humanities are only accessories and are not necessary for all students as immediate preparation for earning a living.

3. Possible approaches seem to point to two different concentrations.
   a. Vocational-Technical: skills, job-related assignments, non-abstract treatment, student-life vocabulary.
   b. Transfer: appreciation, deeper analysis, and more abstract approach.
   (Major discussion in this area centered on English courses; people in other fields felt this division was not a necessity, as did some of the English personnel.)

C. Examine current requirements and reduce the number of required courses, giving more freedom in electives throughout humanities.

VII. What should be the basic considerations in the preparation of junior college teachers?

A. Is there any specific difference to be noted in preparation of the junior college teacher from that of any other college teacher?

B. Should graduate work deal specifically with junior college problems?

C. Should there be an internship program for junior college teachers?

D. Should junior college faculty and administration directly influence and/or control graduate training of prospective junior college teachers rather than continue standard education department training?
(Very limited discussion in this area; general impression was that the junior colleges should have *direct* influence through participation in setting up courses and in supervising the training of their teachers through graduate and/or internship programs.)

VIII. Recommendations.

A. Establish means of evaluating junior college systems and of evaluating individual disciplines within the junior college. Establish goals of the junior college in relation to student needs and in relation to other educational systems in the state. Assess current requirements for graduation or certification.

1. Continuing conference or study center involving junior college instructors, and consistency in programs in the junior colleges.

2. Summer conferences of approximately two weeks, basically workshop structure, to be held prior to fall session to deal with problems in specific disciplines and in the junior college as a whole.

B. Establish inter-college programs to gain more effectiveness in the use of resources.

1. Share ideas and materials.
   a. Video-taped material.
   b. News sheets.
   c. Films.
2. Share staff.

IX. Areas for additional study.

A. Position of junior colleges throughout the state to determine goals and intents relative to two distinct areas of student preparation.

B. Necessity for junior colleges to know what each is doing, and to know what is occurring in other educational institutions which will directly affect the junior college.

C. Necessity to assess the position of humanities in requirements presently established within the junior college and in relation to transfer institutions.

D. Necessity to convey the ideas and recommendations of the junior college faculty to both the Junior College Board and the state legislature.

Group VI Participants

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Margaret Kennedy, St. Mary's Junior College, Fine Arts
Eleanor Peterson, Mesabi State Junior College, English
Barry Schuler, Metropolitan State Junior College, Dean of Instruction

SECTION 4

RESPONSE TO THE REPORTS
Presented by the Recorders on Tuesday, January 16, 1968

Dr. Donald K. Smith, Associate Vice President of Academic Administration, University of Minnesota

First, let me comment upon some of the specific recommendations presented in these reports.

The interest expressed in experimentation with pass/no credit grading seems to me well worth pursuing. We added a P-N (pass/no credit) option to the University's grading system this year, and about 2,000 students took a course under this option in fall quarter. We will have some reports on our experience with the system by next year, but I suspect we will need to try the system for several years before reaching a final judgment on its merit. The system seeks to make it possible for students to take some part of their work under circumstances which remove the noise caused by grade competition from the learning purposes of the class; good teaching and learning might be promoted under such circumstances. This objective is so desirable that I think every educational institution should be experimenting to see what could be achieved.

Experimentation is wide-spread nationally. I recently read an interesting research report on the use of P-F (pass-fail) grading at the University of Michigan. The man writing the report may have had his tongue in his cheek because he reported that the surprising result was that students were not exploiting the system. He may have been "putting the faculty on" just a bit by reporting this way. He found that students under the P-F system were achieving as much in their courses as they would have been expected to achieve under a competitive system. That is, if they were "B" students on the average, they did "B" work even if they needed only a "C" to pass.

Like all grading systems, P-N or P-F has no magic for achieving good teaching or learning, but it may be a way of telling students that our purposes are to achieve good teaching and learning and that extrinsic motivations should not get in the way of these purposes.

I was interested in Mr. Amram's reference to the importance of space for what I would call "free experience with the arts." I think this is very important. The All-University Council on Liberal Education is asking the University community this year to suggest designs for what we call "learning centers" on campus. We believe that students need space for conversation, study, discussion, and informal education as much as they need space for classes. They need this space for academic and intellectual purposes and not just recreation. If we could provide areas in which students could paint, sculpture, play musical instruments, or produce plays, we would do much to make their education more vital. Lack of space for this kind of activity is an almost insuperable obstacle at the University, and I'm sure you face equal or even more serious problems in terms of space and facilities. It is little comfort to know that most public institutions, nationally, are equally hard up for space. Yet I do think that if we define our needs for space in terms of what is necessary for good education, society will respond to our requests. Our failure to get funds for space intrinsically related to instructional and educational necessities follows often from our failure to articulate clearly enough what is really required for an effective educational program.

I was also interested in Mr. Amram's title — "terminal humanities." Perhaps all of us who teach in a humanistic tradition are engaged in terminal activity. We can use the rough

framework of terminal students, transfer students, and pre-professional students as a way of defining problems of curriculum design. Yet these abstract categories collapse on us when we face our students. If we really knew how to teach in ways that brought humane wisdom to our students, we would probably reach students in all of the categories we use. I would urge that in the humanities we should concentrate on what to teach and how to teach it rather than on the idea of differential experience for different groups of students.

The question "Is the junior college teacher different?" is intriguing. As the chairman of Group I observed, some say "yes" and some say "no" when the question is discussed. I would suggest a different formulation of the question. "Can junior college teachers find concrete aspirations for themselves which tend to be self-forming — to create differences?" I was talking this morning with President Dixon from Antioch College, and he observed that many teachers are troubled by the problem of entering into productive transactions, either with students or with fellow academicians. He thought that many people who choose teaching as a vocation tend to retreat to very narrow and safe ground in their transactions. They talk from some narrow base of expertise to avoid any risk of criticism or rejoinder from others. In other words, if I learn enough about Medieval rhetoric so that few people in the world can challenge my authority, I can talk endlessly at students or fellow teachers without any risk. But, of course, I will also avoid any genuine dialogue with others on matters that affect them deeply. I gain security by being dull.

President Dixon's comment led me to think again about the enormous challenge in the vocation of teacher. It seems to me a professional group which sets its purposes in terms of great teaching can find a self-forming ideal in this purpose, and to the extent that its members visualize and seek this ideal, they may become different. I am not proposing any nonsense such as the notion that a junior college teacher is different from a four-year college teacher is different from a high school teacher is different from a university teacher. I am saying that any professional group finds its distinctiveness in the clarity of its goals.

Now let me go on to two or three broader propositions. One of them is a backgrounding proposition, which is much discussed and reasonably obvious; and that is that we live in a world of very rapid institutional change. We have been forced into the business of inventing new institutions and new social organizations at an unprecedented rate. I think it's fair to say that this recent history of the formation of new institutions is largely a history of improvisation — that much of what occurs, occurs out of a kind of pressure and desperation. What we are all searching for is a better grip on what might be called "intentional change" — the business of thoughtfully designed institution building aimed at creating institutions which are adapted to the radically altered circumstances in which we live. Now, I make this point only because the junior colleges in Minnesota, while they're not a new institution, do in many ways take on the form of a new institution in the very speed with which the system is being elaborated as a key part and a major part of the entire state system of higher education. This means, in effect, that the relationship of the University or of the state college system or the private college system to the junior college system is not that of older institutions which will remain unchanged by reason of the appearance and growth of junior colleges, but of institutions which must themselves change. You see, your very existence and rapid development forces a situation which will change the University; and if we behave in the future as we have in the past, these changes will be only partly intentional. Many of them will be accidental and improvisational in nature. And what I'm really suggesting is that if we had the wisdom somehow to begin now to chart the course of the interactive changes that must occur, working on them together, we might move toward this notion of intentional institution building, as opposed to accidental or improvised institution building.

The changes in higher education, if they are to be thoughtful and intentional, have to involve the rapid development of inter-institutional planning, including the innovation of inter-institutional cooperative arrangements. In a self-reflexive way, this inter-institutional life is one of our greatest needs for institutionalization. (Now that's sufficiently garbled syntax so

I'd better run over it again, just to clarify it for myself.) What I'm saying is that we aren't going to make the grade on intentional modification and development of our several institutions unless we get into the business of inter-institutional planning and inter-institutional arrangements. I'm also saying that we know very little about the way in which one carries out such inter-institutional planning and inter-institutional arrangement systematically and effectively and productively. We don't have a clear inter-institutional frame of reference, nor do we have the habits and skills which would enable us to say that our inter-institutional life is institutionalized. And the social invention that I'm calling for — the institution building that I'm calling for — is the building of institutions which are inter-institutional in their intent and their purposes. I'm persuaded that these arrangements are going to occur — that some of them have already, in nascent form, appeared on the horizon. I'm also persuaded that, unless those of us who are in higher education invent them, organize them, develop them, they will be provided for us. Then it won't be simply the junior colleges who are suffering from the feeling that somebody else is making decisions for them; it will be all of us who will see that somebody else is making decisions for us. We have, therefore, a common need to work for a kind of new arrangement focused on inter-institutional planning and development.

Now let me make this a little more specific. I'm not talking in a vacuum of activity here, obviously; but I do think our needs for cooperative efforts outrun our capacity for innovation and often outrun what we believe to be our available time resources. If we take the area of teacher preparation, which was referred to by a number of the panelists, we do have a chance in the junior college area of avoiding certain historic errors in teacher education at the elementary and secondary level. Here we allowed teacher education to become primarily the province of colleges and universities and divorced from an active engagement in this process almost the whole of the recipient organizations. I don't believe the mirror image of this error would work any better than the error. That is to say, I think the difficulties that have come from teacher-training programs excessively divorced from the arena of the schools would reappear in intensified form if you conceived of teacher education in the schools divorced from the colleges and universities. And I think that in planning for junior college-college-university relationships in teacher education, we should consider the analogue of secondary education and its relationship with institutions of higher learning. There are people here who probably know this history better than I do, but — to give my version of one aspect of it — in the 1880's and 1890's or thereabouts, and in the years following, the public school systems of the United States by and large declared their independence from institutions of higher learning insofar as the development of curriculum and instruction was concerned. They didn't divorce themselves totally because they left an absolute ingredient of their system in the hands of the colleges and universities: namely, teacher training. In the post-World War Two era, the pendulum swung rapidly in the opposite direction, and the statement was often made that we had got ourselves into a disastrous situation in which the intellectual life of the schools had been divorced from the intellectual life of institutions of higher learning. We had broken the fabric of knowledge in ways which left us with a chaotic intellectual life. You may not agree wholly with this proposition. I don't, but it was widely accepted, and an enormous amount of effort has taken place since to try to bring institutions of higher learning back into an active engagement with the question of what goes on in elementary and secondary school education.

I think, by and large, this reengagement has been productive and has suggested that the divorce itself was wrong. What we're trying to move toward, I would think, in the field of teacher education for the public schools, is not divorcement, but is a kind of internship relationship in which the public schools themselves will be actively and directly involved as partners in the internships through which teachers move from the state of novicehood to the state of full professional accomplishment. These models are developing very rapidly in the United States — we have a number of probes going on in this direction in the state of Minnesota at the present time — which proceed away from the isolation of teacher training from the schools, but just as sharply away from the isolation of the schools from the training. The

models point toward partnership arrangements in which the resources of higher education and the resources of the school are brought together in the process of teacher education. I'm sold on the model; part of the reason is that I'm engaged, in another incarnation, in actually working on some of these designs in the area of arrangements between institutions of higher learning and other schools. We're working, for example, on a consortium arrangement involving a group of higher educational institutions in relationship with school systems on the preparation of core-city teachers. I believe this is the model we really are seeking in the preparation of junior college teachers: a genuine inter-institutional partnership which makes the junior college system, and the systems presumably concerned with baccalaureate and graduate-level training, partners in the design of, and the conduct of, and the management of the professionalizing system. This seems to me to be the real world that we should be pointing toward.

My next proposition relates to your idea of a junior college center. Let me be blunt about what I think is a reality in terms of the development of significant center activities for the state of Minnesota. I happen to believe that there are a variety of vital roles which can be played by educational development centers. But let me pick just one function: that of systematic instructional development. I believe it to be the case that our historical assumption that the individual teacher renews his own instruction is no longer valid — for vast areas of the curriculum, at least. As I look back at my own life as a teacher, for example, it seems to me I've always lived, and asked others to live, on the assumption that I teach my courses; and then I've got a little time to read and prepare for tomorrow; and then occasionally I get a little time off for summer school to renew myself intellectually, or bore myself with varied occupations; and meanwhile I'm always getting better and better and better. My course is improving, my materials are getting better, my skills in handling them are getting better, and so on. To some extent, this may work for awhile. In a broader perspective, I don't think it comprehends the amount of time, the amount of energy, and the amount of help people need genuinely to improve the materials and methods of their instruction. I think we are moving toward the notion that if we're going to get systematic instructional improvement, we've got to build a system in which we assume that many teachers will periodically have an opportunity — under fellowship arrangements, perhaps — to work in circumstances where they can find supportive colleague relationships. That is, they will work partly by themselves, but also work in interaction with other people on tasks of development for their instructional materials, tasks of development for their teaching methods — including, perhaps, developing their own capacities to handle certain kinds of relationships with students that they might want to be able to handle, but are conscious that they've been unprepared for up to this point in their lives. At a proper moment in my life, for example, somebody should have given me a summer to simply work on Socratic questioning. I can give a reasonably good lecture on the nature and theory of such questioning. But I don't do it very well. I sat with a young teacher the other day — he was teaching a seminar that I'm involved in — and I was impressed by the skill with which he questioned the students. I asked him how he learned this, and he said, "It's a form of theatre." It was a beautiful demonstration, one that taught me something about teaching. But it also taught me, I think, that I can't go back this week and do that myself; it's a skill I would have to practice, and practice under conditions where I'd have some guidance and some help. Such practice would provide personal development to handle a methodology that I don't think I could manage very well at the present time.

We often get into teaching situations where we need the collaboration of either audio-visual technicians or audio-visual artists. Sometimes all you need to help you prepare supporting teaching materials is a technician. Other times you need a collaborator who is an artist in video communication. I've been surprised, in two respects, by certain math films produced in recent years at the University — films turned out by putting together a distinguished mathematician and an artistic film-maker. They brought in other people on the team: a professional musician at certain points and a graphics specialist at other points. The two things which surprised me about the films were: a) their superb quality and b) their great cost.

The individual faculty member working alone couldn't achieve the quality, and no teaching department could afford it. So at this point I began thinking of the productivity that might be achieved by a junior college center funded to support intensive work in educational development. I believe every type of subject matter that's being taught for large groups of students ought to be in a state of constant reexamination, development, and reconstruction. Here is a major opportunity for inter-institutional work. What I would like to see us find is the institutional frame within which junior college teachers, university teachers, and college teachers, could come to work, to work on problems they had defined for themselves, and to work as individuals with back-up technological help or work as groups who had resources available for productive development.

SECTION 5

L'ENVOI

Leon Reisman, General College, University of Minnesota
Chairman of Planning Committee

You can see why we like Don Smith: he has an incisive and generous and knowledgeable mind, and — for an administrator — he's not very cautious. He's quite right in saying that I want to talk too. But perhaps I can do so briefly, within the context of concluding our conference. May I thank once again the people on the Planning Committee and the people who were our Discussion Leaders — people who were once just names, but now they are very dear to me. We've worked together; we've been in the process of open encounter for two and a half days; we've embarked on this hazardous journey; we were warned that it was impossible; we were told that the national model for this was at least five and a half days; but, as we've been told by our friends on this platform, nobody can tell a junior college teacher anything. So we did it anyhow.

If you will be gentle with me and charitable with me, maybe you will forgive my presumption for talking for you, and also a bit for myself. I'm tired too, but I feel really very much alive; I feel kind of thin-skinned; I feel, after this experience — if you'll forgive a horsey metaphor — high-mettled; I don't think that my intellect is in jeopardy; I don't feel feverish; I feel, on the contrary, that this experience has honed my judgment. One of the things that I think I've learned is that perhaps it's peculiarly appropriate to people in the humanities to undertake a project of this kind. Maybe in this depersonalized civilization there is a place for us to be audacious; there is a place for us to be divergent. Maybe, if you'll forgive the sentimentality, the last hero in our civilization is the humanities teacher. I think we've learned, too, that we don't need to be skittish before the University. The University has its problems; there's no reason why it shouldn't absorb ours too. It has many more resources than we have, and lots of people with lots of talent — people with broad shoulders who can take on some of our hopes and make some of our dreams come true. In the General College we've learned to be divergent; we've learned to be audacious. I think that I, for one, because of my training there, have been so during the conference; and when I teetered on the abyss and fell in with a sodden splash, somebody was always there with a rope to pull me up and embrace me. So I feel much more robust now than I did when we first began. And I hope that you feel this way too. When I heard voices of discord down the hall, I didn't feel that the jangling was unmelodious. I felt that people were coming alive. Let's live together in this kind of discordant way. This is one way of proving that we are human beings, that we are teachers of humanities.

May I thank also, in addition to my committees, Roger Garrison, a guy who's a vital humanist, a realist and a kind of faith healer. I want to thank Alan Anderson — whom you have not met, but whom our group discussion leaders have been meeting — because he's a very sensitive and sweet guy, and he helped us in a very unselfish way, and helped us a great deal. I want to thank Dean Thompson, of the Extension Division, under whose auspices we're meeting. I want to thank Ray Stave, whom you've met; but, may I assure you, he is much more than an expediter (he has a very good-looking secretary who can do this for him). It's depressing in this sprawling university community that you don't know the people who work next door. Ray has turned out to be more than just a very efficient Program Director in

the Department of Conferences and Institutes; he involves himself in a conference in a very individual way: he commits himself to it because of his own educational background, and he follows through. And he has in many ways indicated that he's following through what the hopes and the dreams and the intent of this conference are. So we can pin our faith not only upon people like Vice-President Smith, but upon people like Director Stave. May I thank also Dr. Helland, who gave us his blessing and his full cooperation; and the Steering Committee, who gave birth to this conference, and who did the magical thing — found funds for it. To my own Deans, Vaughan and Moen, I am particularly grateful for encouraging and supporting my participation in this conference. Finally, I want to thank Dr. Smith for representing the University, for giving us the kind of generous hosting that we needed. But most of all I want to thank you. I want to thank you because it was your conference; you did it. Whatever these people are saying up here, you told them to say. Whatever the results of this conference will be, wherever they will go, it will be because you were here.

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